

Aras pontificating at dinner about the intimate relations of Louis XIV and Madame de Maintenon: 'Eh bien, Mon-
 deur, que faites-vous pour etre si sur de ces choses-la?*

Mr. Eliot has himself observed that 'English criticism is inclined to argue or persuade, rather than to state'. It is possible that this may be a smaller fault than he supposes.

Certainly he will be acquitted of it. -

This unfortunate side of the criticism of Mr. Eliot and his school is due, I think, partly to their very zeal for the good cause, and to their conception, of which something has been said above, of critics as commissioned to improve and reform mankind. They see themselves as defending the Capitol from the Gauls, the faith from the infidel. 'The Charles Louis Philippes of English literature are never done with', writes Mr. Eliot, in the tone of a weary Hercules, 'because there is no one to kill their reputations; we still hear that George Meredith is a master of prose, or even a profound philosopher. The creative artist in England finds himself compelled, or at least tempted, to spend much of his time and energy in criticism that he might reserve for the perfecting of his proper work: simply because there is no one else to do it/

It would be interesting to hear the names of a few of these creative artists who so nobly allowed their lives to be blighted in the sacred cause of 'killing reputations* lest English literature should go to the dogs.

I suppose
Mr. Eliot is dunking, among others, of
himself. But who
are the others? Matthew Arnold? Was it
criticism that
dried up the stream of his poetry? If so, it
was a pity.
But I know no reason to think so. And why
this duty of
'killing artists' reputations'? If they can be
killed, would
they not die naturally, even if let alone? And
can they be
killed in any case? Was Bendey so wrong in
his brave
saying that fito man was ever written down
except by